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## **California Policy Lab and UC Berkeley Labor Center Awarded \$680,000 to Shed Light on the Gig Economy**

**Berkeley**--The [California Policy Lab \(CPL\)](#) and the [UC Berkeley Labor Center](#) were recently awarded \$680,000 to support [research](#) that will shed new light on the number and type of independent contractors in California.

Generous funding for this work was provided by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

“The growth of on-demand companies like Uber or Taskrabbit has created a perception that the ‘gig economy’ is rapidly expanding and freelancing will soon become the norm,” said Jesse Rothstein, co-Director of the California Policy Lab and Director of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. “But good information about the gig economy is sparse and estimates of its size vary widely.”

Researchers will analyze individual tax return data to learn about different forms of independent contracting, including how workers combine them with traditional sources of income. The funding will also be used to develop a multi-year dataset that will facilitate research on employment, taxes, and safety net participation.

“Standard data sources on employment, such as worker surveys and unemployment insurance records, have been oriented toward traditional jobs,” said Annette Bernhardt, director of the [Low-Wage Work Program](#) at the UC Berkeley Labor Center. “They also contain significant reporting errors. This funding enables us to move away from guesswork and produce reliable data about independent contractors in California.”

The study will look at trends over time, demographic characteristics, and prevalence by industry. It will also examine unknowns, such as how many workers are using independent contracting for their main source of earnings versus supplemental income. Initial findings are expected to be released in mid-2019.

Read more: <https://www.capolicylab.org/beyond-gig/>

### **About the California Policy Lab (@CAPolicyLab)**

The [California Policy Lab](#) is a new University of California initiative, begun in 2017 at UC Berkeley and UCLA, designed to create data-driven insights for the public good. Its mission is to

partner with California's state and local governments to generate scientific evidence that solves California's most urgent problems, including homelessness, poverty, crime, and education inequality.

**About the Center for Labor Research and Education (@UCBLaborCenter)**

The Center for Labor Research and Education (Labor Center) is a public service project of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) at UC Berkeley. IRLE connects world-class research with policy to improve workers' lives, communities, and society.

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